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## **Youth Strength Training**

### **Is strength training really good for a child?**

The answer is Yes! Strength training exercises that are supervised, safe and age appropriate offer many bonuses to young athletes. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Sports Medicine and the National Strength and Conditioning Association recommend strength training for kids. Today's children are increasingly overweight and out of shape. Cormax fitness training can put them on a lifetime path to better health and fitness.

### **What is the difference between strength training and weight lifting?**

Strength training for kids (not to be confused with weight lifting, body building or power-lifting) is a carefully designed program of exercises to increase muscle speed, strength and endurance. Strength training for kids isn't about lifting heavier weight or building bigger muscles. Instead the focus is on lighter weights and controlled movements with a special emphasis on proper techniques and safety.

### **What are some of the benefits for young athletes?**

Supervised strength training that uses weight machines with safety cylinders and electronic timers provide these benefits:

- Increases a young athlete's muscle strength and endurance.
- Protects the athlete's muscles and joints from injury.
- Helps improve performance in a particular sport.
- Better heart and lung function.
- A healthy body composition.
- Stronger bones.
- Lower blood cholesterol levels.
- A good fitness habit that lasts a lifetime.

Some studies suggest that improved self-esteem and a decreased chance of depression are a result of a well designed strength training program. Your child may get a shot of self-confidence and a feel-good boost of self-esteem after improving his or her performance.

### **When should my child start strength training?**

A good rule of thumb is if your child is old enough to participate in sports such as hockey, soccer, or baseball, he or she is old enough to start strength training.

### **What are some of the general principles of strength training for kids?**

The general principles of youth strength training are:

- Proper Instruction. Your child should be taught how to perform strength training exercise using proper form.
- Supervision. Adult supervision is important to reinforce safety and good technique. Think light and moderate weights with controlled repetitions. Kids can safely lift adult-sized weights as long as the weight that is lifted can be lifted with a smooth and accelerate motion.
- Rest between workouts. Three sessions a week is plenty with a rest period of at least one day between sessions.
- Track progress. Your child should fill out a chart or card to record and monitor progress. Add weight gradually. Only when your child can lift a weight smoothly and with acceleration should you add weight. Five to six repetitions per exercise is recommended.
- Keep it fun. Have your child train with you, a friend or another family member. Vary the exercises. Mix it up. Kids are more likely to stick to strength training if they have fun doing it.
- Encouragement from a parent. Encourage physical activity in your child it is a key step to becoming a healthy adult. Be a good example for your child.

Becoming bigger and stronger is critical to athletic success. Strength contributes to running faster, jumping higher, and being more explosive. Remember that you still must focus on other skill components of their sport. Strength and fitness are just the foundation that these other attributes build off of.